

HOW TO MAKE COPIES OF PERFINS ON COVER

by Vojtech Maxa

My good friend Dave Malyon recently posed the question of how to make copies of Perfins affixed to envelopes. I have gained some experience in drawing Perfin dies for the catalogs I have been working on, and I have devised a method that is quite simple. I hope others will find it useful.

I take a small sheet of glassine paper (a slit-apart glassine envelope will do nicely) and place it over the Perfin affixed to the cover. Then, using a magnifier (I use a watchmaker's loupe so I have both hands free), I trace the holes. I use either a sharp-point felt-tip pen, or a pen with India ink. India ink sticks better to the glassine paper and the black ink contrasts well with most stamps.

When the tracing is dry, I examine it to see which side should be up to place the Perfin in correct perspective. Then I place the glassine on a light box (an old cigar box with a pane of glass replacing the lid and a low-power light bulb inside works fine), cover the glassine with the album page or other sheet I want the drawing on, and copy the Perfin with a sharp pencil.

Care must be taken to work precisely since the double-transfer can distort the design slightly. If you don't have a light box, you can use a window glass, although drawing the die on the vertical surface is more difficult.

If you want to transfer the drawing to a paper that is not transparent - such as a heavy card stock - you can place a sheet of carbon paper on the heavy paper, place the glassine drawing over it, and press just slightly with a sharp pencil to transfer the drawing to the heavy paper.

With a little practice, this double-transfer method will give you perfect results.